

I CLAIM:

1. A laryngeal mask airway comprising:

a curved tubular guide for insertion through a patient's mouth and into the patient's airway, said guide having a distal opening to abut the patient's laryngeal inlet and a proximal opening remaining outside the patient's mouth after insertion of the guide, said guide allowing insertion of an endotracheal tube along the guide to a position past the patient's larynx;

a laryngeal mask surrounding the distal opening of the guide to substantially seal the laryngeal inlet about the distal opening of the guide; and

a ventilation port adjacent to the proximal opening of the guide to supply a flow of air/oxygen through the guide and the patient's larynx into the patient's lungs during insertion of an endotracheal tube along the guide.

2. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 1 further comprising a removable guide cap to substantially seal the proximal opening of the guide during insertion of the guide.

3. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 1 further comprising a sealing ring within the guide adjacent to the proximal opening of the guide providing a loose seal around the endotracheal tube as the endotracheal tube is inserted along the guide.

4. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 1 wherein the ventilation port further comprises a rotatable collar surrounding the proximal

portion of the guide, thereby allowing the ventilation port to be rotated to any desired orientation about the guide.

5. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 1 wherein the laryngeal mask further comprises:

a lower portion shaped to substantially block the patient's esophagus below the patient's laryngeal inlet; and

5 an upper portion surrounding the distal opening of the guide and substantially filling the patient's laryngopharynx adjacent to the laryngeal inlet, wherein the laryngeal mask directs the guide along the patient's airway so that the distal opening of the guide abuts the patient's laryngeal inlet.

6. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 1 further comprising a protrusion extending from an anterior portion of the distal tip of the guide to push against the patient's vallecula and thereby lift the epiglottis from the laryngeal inlet.

7. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 1 wherein the laryngeal mask further comprises opposing side portions to pinch the patient's epiglottis between the side portions of the laryngeal mask as the guide is inserted into the patient's laryngopharynx to thereby lift the epiglottis from the laryngeal inlet.

8. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 1 wherein the laryngeal mask is inflatable.

9. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 1 wherein the laryngeal mask comprises a soft, resilient material.

10. A laryngeal mask airway comprising:

a curved tubular guide for insertion through a patient's mouth and into the patient's airway, said guide having a distal opening to abut the patient's laryngeal inlet and a proximal opening remaining outside the patient's mouth after insertion of the guide, said guide allowing insertion of an endotracheal tube along the guide to a position past the patient's larynx; and

a laryngeal mask surrounding the distal opening of the guide to substantially seal the laryngeal inlet in fluid communication with the distal opening of the guide, said laryngeal mask having:

(a) a lower portion shaped to substantially block the patient's esophagus below the patient's laryngeal inlet and align the distal opening of the guide with the patient's laryngeal inlet; and

(b) an upper portion surrounding the distal opening of the guide and substantially filling the patient's laryngopharynx adjacent to the laryngeal inlet, so that the distal opening of the guide is axially aligned with and abuts the patient's laryngeal inlet on end as the guide is inserted along the patient's airway and is sealed in fluid communication with the patient's laryngeal inlet by the laryngeal mask.

11. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 10 further comprising a removable guide cap to substantially seal the proximal opening of the guide during insertion of the guide.

12. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 10 further comprising a ventilation port adjacent to the proximal opening of the guide to supply a flow of air/oxygen through the guide and the patient's larynx into the patient's lungs during insertion of an endotracheal tube along the guide.

13. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 10 wherein the guide is contoured to the shape of the patient's mouth and airway.

14. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 10 wherein the distal opening of the guide is beveled to substantially match the angle of the laryngeal inlet.

15. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 10 further comprising a sealing ring within the guide adjacent to the proximal opening of the guide providing a loose seal around the endotracheal tube as the endotracheal tube is inserted along the guide.

16. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 10 further comprising a protrusion extending from the anterior portion of the distal tip of the guide to push against the patient's vallecula and thereby lift the epiglottis from the laryngeal inlet.

17. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 10 wherein the laryngeal mask further comprises opposing side portions to pinch the patient's epiglottis between the side portions of the laryngeal mask as the guide is inserted into the patient's laryngopharynx to thereby lift the epiglottis from the laryngeal inlet.

5

18. A laryngeal mask airway comprising:

a curved tubular guide for insertion through a patient's mouth and into the patient's airway to allow insertion of an endotracheal tube along the guide and through the patient's larynx, said guide having a distal opening to abut the patient's laryngeal inlet and a proximal opening remaining outside the patient's mouth after insertion of the

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guide; and

a laryngeal mask surrounding the distal opening of the guide to substantially seal the laryngeal inlet about the distal opening of the guide, said laryngeal mask having:

(a) a support member extending from the distal end the guide and having a tip extending into the patient's esophagus;

(b) a protrusion to push against the patient's vallecula and thereby lift the epiglottis from the laryngeal inlet as the guide is inserted into the patient's laryngopharynx;

(c) a lower portion extending from the support member that is shaped to substantially block the patient's esophagus below the patient's laryngeal inlet and align the distal opening of the guide with the patient's laryngeal inlet as the guide is advanced along the patient's airway; and

(d) an upper portion extending from the support member and surrounding the distal opening of the guide to substantially fill the patient's laryngopharynx adjacent to the laryngeal inlet, said upper portion having opposing side portions to pinch the patient's epiglottis and thereby lift the epiglottis from the laryngeal inlet, so that the distal opening of the guide abuts the patient's laryngeal inlet as the guide is advanced along the patient's airway and is sealed in fluid communication with the patient's laryngeal inlet; and

a ventilation port adjacent to the proximal opening of the guide to supply a flow of air/oxygen through the guide and the patient's larynx into the patient's lungs during insertion of an endotracheal tube along the guide.

19. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 18 wherein the ventilation port further comprises a rotatable collar surrounding the proximal

portion of the guide, thereby allowing the ventilation port to be rotated to any desired orientation about the guide.

20. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 18 further comprising a sealing ring within the guide adjacent to the proximal opening of the guide providing a loose seal around the endotracheal tube as the endotracheal tube is inserted along the guide.

21. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 18 further comprising a removable guide cap to substantially seal the proximal opening of the guide during insertion of the guide.

22. The laryngeal mask airway of claim 18 wherein the laryngeal mask is inflatable.

23. A method for resuscitating a patient and guiding insertion of an endotracheal tube into the patient's trachea comprising:

5 inserting a tubular guide into a patient's mouth and hypopharynx, said guide having a curved distal portion shaped to allow insertion of an endotracheal tube through the guide into a patient's trachea, said guide further having a laryngeal mask surrounding the distal opening of the guide to substantially seal the laryngeal inlet about the distal opening of the guide;

 inserting the fiber optic probe into an endotracheal tube;

10 advancing the fiber optic probe and endotracheal tube so that the endotracheal tube advances along the guide and into the patient's trachea;

 supplying air/oxygen via the guide into the patient's lungs while advancing the endotracheal tube and fiber optic probe;

15 removing the guide from the endotracheal tube;

removing the fiber optic probe from the endotracheal tube; and ventilating the patient through the endotracheal tube.

24. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of:
attaching a stabilizer at a desired position on the fiber optic probe; and
inserting the fiber optic probe into the endotracheal tube until
the stabilizer abuts the proximal end of the endotracheal tube.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein the stabilizer is attached to the fiber optic probe at a location so that the distal tip of the fiber optic probe extends beyond the distal tip of the endotracheal tube.

26. The method of claim 24 further comprising the steps of:
attaching a removable cap to the proximal end of the endotracheal tube prior to insertion of the fiber optic probe, said cap having a passageway to receive the fiber optic probe with an inside diameter larger than the stabilizer; and
removing the cap from the endotracheal after the fiber optic probe is removed from the endotracheal tube and prior to ventilating the patient through the endotracheal tube.